The Theosophical FORUM

DECEMBER 1902

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ISSUED MONTHLY

VOL. 8 NO. 8

Flushing

New York

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Entercd at the Post Office at Flushing, N. Y., as second-class matter, April 20, 1901.

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

VOL. 8. DECEMBER, 1902 No. 8

* * *

We ought to find it more difficult to condemn people than to consider them simply as one considers trees shaken by the wind or a flowing river. But we find it difficult to abstain from condemning. Then what are we to do? First, we are to learn to condemn ourselves for condemning others, then to abstain from spoken condemnation, when our thought inclines towards it, and lastly to check the thought itself. The man, who knows and judges himself rightly, has no time to condemn others.

Endeavor to interpret favourably the intention and heart of the man next to you: if you do this, you will be safe from a harmful failing and he will find improvement easier.

It is true that good is a power and evil a weakness. But still we must be careful, that the passionateness of our will should not confuse and darken the light.

Let us love not with words, but with deeds and truth. Love does not lose by silence. Reality does not cease when word ceases. Let us trust each other's silence, as we trust each other's word.

Philaretes, Metropolitan of Moscow.

THE EARLY RACES

IN THE POPOL VUH.

(Continued.)

If we be asked in what way the ancient Quiches of Guatemala could preserve the memory, not only of their chronicles, but of elaborate creation stories and myths, such as those which we translated, one may reply in the words of Las Casas:

As for that, it must be known that, in all the republics of these regions, in the kingdoms of New Spain and elsewhere, amongst other professions and those who followed them, there were those who performed the functions of chroniclers and historians. They had a knowledge of the origins of all things touching religion, the gods, and their worship, as also of the founders of towns and cities. They knew the manner in which their kings and lords had arisen, as also their kingdoms, their modes of election, and of succession; the number and character of the princes who had passed away; their works, and memorable acts and deeds, both good and evil; whether they had governed well or ill; who were the righteous men and the heroes who had lived; what wars they had waged, and how they had prospered in them; what had been their ancient customs and primitive populations; the changes for the better, or the disasters that overtook them; in a word, the whole material of history; in order that the understanding and memory of the past might be preserved. These chroniclers kept count of the days, the months, and the years. Though they had not writing like ours, they had, nevertheless, their figures and characters, by the aid of which they could express whatever they wished, and in this way they had their great books composed with such art, such ingenuity and skill, that we might say our alphabet was of no great use to them. Our priests and friars have seen these books, and I myself have also seen them, though some of them were burnt at the instance of the monks, in fear lest, in matters of religion, they might be injurious.

So far the old Spanish writer. We return now to the text of the Popol Vuh, resuming the story at the point where we left off last month:

"Thus was needed a new attempt at forming creatures by the Creator and the Former by the Engenderer and the Lifegiver:

"Let us try once more; already the seedtime approaches, and the dawn is near; let us make those who are to be our sustainers and nourishers.

" 'How may we come to be invoked and commemorated on the face of the earth? We have already tried with our first work, our first creation: we have not succeeded in making them worship and honor us. Therefore let us try to make men, obedient and full of respect, to be our sustainers and nourishers.'

"They spoke. Then took place the creation and formation of men; of clay was their flesh made.

"They saw that he was not good; for he was without cohesion, without consistence, without movements, without force, inept and watery; he could not move his head, his face turned only in one direction; his vision was veiled, and he could not look behind; he was endowed with the gift of speech, but he had no understanding, and straightway he dissolved into water, without having the power of holding himself upright.

"Now the Creator and the Former spoke once more: The more we labor on him, the less is he able to walk and multiply: therefore let us now make an intelligent creature, they said.

"Then they unmade and destroyed their work and their creation once more. Forthwith they said: 'How shall we act now, in order that beings to adore and invoke us may be produced?'

"Then they said, while they were consulting anew: 'Let us speak of them to Shriyacoc and Shmucane, who wield the blow-gun against opossum and jackal; try once more to draw his lot, and to find the time of his formation.' Thus the Creator and the Former spoke together, and then they spoke to Shriyacoc and Shmucane.

"Straightway they held converse with these soothsayers, the foreempter of the sun and the foremother of light,—for thus are they called by those whom are the Creator and the Former, and these are the names of Shriyacoc and Shmucane.

"And those of the Great Breath spoke to the Dominator and the Azure-plumed Serpent: then they spoke to him of the sun, to

the formative powers, who are the soothsayers: 'It is time once more to discuss together the signs of the man we formed, that he may once again be our sustainer and nourisher, that we may be invoked and commemorated.

"'Begin, then, to speak, oh thou who engenderest and givest birth, our foremother and forefather, Shriyacoc and Shmucane; let the germination be accomplished, let the dawn whiten, that we may be invoked, that we may be adored, that we may be commemorated by the man who is formed, the man who is created, the man who is finished, the man who is moulded; thus let it be;

"'Make your name manifest, ye who wield the blow-gun against opossum and jackal, twice engenderer, twice life-giver, great boar, great wielder of quills, he of the emerald, the jeweler, the chiseler, the architect, he of the Azure-green planisphere, he of the Azure surface, the master of resin, the chief of Toltecat, foremother of the sun, foremother of the day; for thus shall ye be called by our work and our creatures;

"'Make your passes over your maize, your seed-pods, to discern whether he shall be made, and whether we shall sculpture and elaborate his face of wood;' thus was it said to the soothsayers.

"Then came the moment to cast the lot, and to salute the enchantment cast with the maize and the bean-pods: Sun and Creature! an old woman and an old man then said to them. Now this old man was the master of the bean-pod, his name was Shriyacoc; and the old woman was the soothsayer, the formative power, whose name was Chirakan Shmucane.

"Then they spoke thus, at the moment when the sun rested in the zenith: 'It is time to take counsel together; speak, that we may hear, that we may speak, and declare whether wood is to be sculptured and carved by the Former and Creator; if this is to be our sustainer and nourisher, at the moment of seedtime, when the dawn grows white.

"'Oh maize, oh bean-pods, oh sun, oh creature, be united, and joined together,'—thus they spoke to the maize and the bean-pods, the sun and the creature. 'Redden thou, O Heart of the Heavens, nor let the brow and the face of the Dominator and the Azure-plumed Serpent be abased.'

"Then they spoke, and declared the truth: 'It is thus, indeed, that you must make your manikins wrought of wood, which shall speak and reason according to their will, upon the face of the earth.

" 'So be it,' they spoke in answer. At that same instant came into being the manikins wrought of wood; men were produced, men who reasoned; and these are the people who dwell upon the face of the earth.

"They lived and multiplied; they begat daughters and sons,—manikins wrought of wood; but they had neither heart nor intelligence, nor memory of their Maker and Creator; they led useless lives, living like the beasts.

"They did not remember the Heart of the Heavens, and this is how they fell; they were only a trial, an attempt at men; who spoke at first, but whose faces dried up; without consistence were their feet and hands; they had no blood, no substance, no roundness of flesh; their faces showed nothing but withered cheeks; their feet and hands were arid, their flesh was withered.

"This is why they did not bethink them to raise their eyes towards their Maker and Creator, their Father and their Providence. These were the first men that existed in numbers upon the face of the earth.

"Finally came about the end of these men, their ruin and their destruction,—of these manikins wrought of wood, who were in like manner put to death.

"The bean-wood formed the flesh of the men: but when the women were shaped by the Maker, and the Creator, the pith of the rush was taken to form the flesh of the women; this is what the Maker and the Creator ordained should make their flesh.

"But they neither thought nor spoke in the presence of their Maker and Creator, who had made them and had given them birth.

"Thus came about their destruction; they were drowned in a deluge, and a thick resin descended upon them from the sky; great birds of prey came to tear their eyes from their orbits; great birds of prey came to cut off their heads; great birds of prey devoured their flesh; great birds of prey crushed and broke their bones and sinews; their bodies were reduced to powder, and strewn broadcast, as a punishment for their deeds.

"Because they had not thought upon their mother and their father, on him who is the Heart of the Heavens, whose name is the Great Breath, because of them, the face of the earth was darkened, and a tumultuous rain began, raining by day, and raining by night.

"Then all the animals, great and small, came against them, and even wood and stone rose up against these men, ill-treating them; all things that had served them spoke, their pots and pans and dishes, their dogs and fowls, everything they possessed, ill-treated them openly.

" 'You acted illy towards us; you bit us; in your turn you shall be tormented,'—their dogs and their fowls said to them.

"Their millstones spoke to them in their turn: 'We are tormented by you; every day and every day, by dark as well as by daylight, always *rattle, rattle, bang, bang,* our sides cried because of you; this is what we endured for you; and now that you have ceased to be men, you shall feel our power; we will pound your flesh, and grind it to powder,'—their millstones said to them.

"And this is what their dogs, speaking in their turn, said to them: 'Why did you not give us food to eat? You hardly looked at us, you drove us away, pursuing after us; you always found something handy, to strike us with, when it was your own time to eat.

" 'This is how you treated us; we could not speak. But for that, we would not now have given you over to death. How was it that you did not bethink you, how did you not understand within yourselves? It is we who now destroy you, and now you shall learn what teeth are in our maws; we shall devour you,' cried their dogs, tearing their faces in pieces.

"Then their pots and pans spoke to them in their turn: 'Pain and sorrow you caused us, smoking our faces and sides; always exposing us to the fire, you burned us, as though we had no feelings; you shall feel it yourselves now, in your turn, and we shall burn you,' said their pots and pans, insulting them to their faces. Thus did also their hearth-stones, demanding that the fire should blaze with violence under their outstretched heads, for the evils they had done them.

"Then were seen men running, pushing each other, full of despair: they sought to climb upon the house-tops, and their houses crumbled away, letting them fall to the earth; they sought to climb into the trees, but the trees shook them away from them; they sought to hide in the caves; but the caves shut in front of them.

"Thus was wrought the ruin of these human beings, creatures fated to be destroyed and overthrown; thus were their persons given over to destruction and contempt.

"And they say that their descendants are to be found, in the little monkeys that now live in the forests; this is the sign that remained of them, because they were formed of wood by the Maker and the Creator.

"That is why those little monkeys look like men, the sign that remains of another generation of human beings, who were only manikins, men wrought in wood.

"A great number of men were made, and during the darkness they multiplied: ordered life did not yet exist, when they multiplied; but they all lived together, and great was their life and their renown in the lands or the Orient.

"At that time, they did not worship, nor sacrifice upon altars to the gods; only they turned their faces toward heaven, and they knew not what they had come so far to do.

"Then lived together in joy the black men and the white men; gentle was the aspect of these people, gentle was the speech of these folk, and they were full of intelligence.

"Thus spoke those of that land, seeing the rising of the sun. Now all of them were of one speech; as yet they bowed not down to wood or stone; they remembered only the wood of their Maker and Creator,—the Heart of the Heavens, and the Heart of the Earth.

"And they spoke, meditating on what concealed the coming of the day: and full of the holy word, full of love, of obedience and reverence, they uttered their entreaties; then, raising their eyes to heaven, they asked for daughters and sons.

" 'Hail O Creator, O Maker! Thou who seest and hearest us! Do not desert us! Do not leave us! O God who are in Heaven and on Earth, O Heart of the Heavens, O Heart of the Earth! Grant us children and offspring so long as the sun and the dawn shall go their ways. Let the seeds spring up, let the

light come! Grant us to walk always in open paths, in ways without ambushes; let us ever be tranquil, and at peace with all our kind; let us live happy lives; give us life and being, free from all reproach, O Great Breath! O Flashing Lightning! O Thunderbolt! Sungod! Messenger! Lord of Breath! Mighty One! Lord of the Azure Veil, Mother of the Sun, Mother of Light, let the seeds spring up! Let the light come!'

"THE PAST."

(*Continued.*)

"There are other pasts still more dangerous than the pasts of happiness and glory; they are those which are inhabited by phantoms, both too mighty and too dear. Numerous are those who perish in the embraces of the beloved shades. Let us not forget those who are not here any longer; but their ideal presence ought to be a consolation instead of a pain. Let us harvest and garner in a faithful soul, happy in its tears, the days they gave us. On leaving us they left us the purest part of what they were; so let us not lose in the same gloom what they left us and what death has taken from us. If, wise as they are, for having seen what is hidden from us by the phantastic light, they were to return to the earth, they would say, I think: 'Do not cry so. Far from reviving us, your tears exhaust us, because they exhaust you. Detach yourself from us, do not think of us any more so long as your thinking about us brings nothing but tears into the life which is left us in you own life. We only subsist in your memories; but you are mistaken in thinking that we are only affected by the regrets of those who miss us. Everything that you do remembers us and gladdens our spirits, without your knowing it, without it being necessary for you to turn towards us. But if our pale image saddens your ardor, we die a death that we feel more, and that is more irrevocable, than the first death; and if you bend too often over our graves, you take from us the life, the love and the courage, which you thought you were giving us.

" 'It is in you that we find being; it is in the whole of your life that our life is to be found; and if you grow, even forgetting us, we grow also; and our shades breathe like prisoners, whose prison begins to open.

" 'If we have learned anything new in the world where we now are, it is above all, that the good we did you, when we were on the earth, like yourself, does not balance the evil done by a memory, which lessens the strength and the confidence of life.' "

That the end of life is not experience itself; that experience is only valuable as a quickener of the spiritual sense, is poetically suggested by the closing passage:

"That which is *most* important in the life of Siegfried is not the forging of the mighty sword, nor the moment in which he kills the dragon and obliges the gods to yield him their place. Neither is it the dazzling moment when he finds love on the mountain of flame. But the brief second, torn from eternal decrees, the insignificant little gesture when, having inadverdently put to his lips one of his hands, red with the blood of his mysterious victim, he has his eyes and his ears opened; he hears the hidden language of everything that surrounds him; he discovers the treason of the dwarf, who represents the evil powers, and all of a sudden learns to do that which he should do."

It is altogether, a marvellous literary phenomenon, whatever view we may take of the Titanic personality which gave birth to it. But the literary output of Mme. Blavatsky by no means ended with her death; she who taught so much and so vividly concerning the state of the soul after death, has in this, herself conquered death.

Other writers have left a posthumous volume; Mme. Blavatsky has left a posthumous library; and new books are constantly being added to it. We had, first, that wonderfully picturesque and vivid story of her Indian days, "From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan,"—half fact, and half fancy, as she herself was the first to say; but, with all the fancy in it, coming, perhaps, nearer to the essential spirit of India, than many a book of solidest facts.

The next work in Mme. Blavatsky's posthumous library was the "Glossary,"—a work as clearly defined in its tendencies as the famous French volumes of the Encyclopædists. It was written not to marshall information gleaned by painful research, but to embody the writer's own original and often exceedingly striking views. Curiously enough, that famous criticism of the great Englishman's Dictionary would come very near to embodying a just estimate of the "Glossary": "the stories are excellent, but they are too short." The truth is that, from a literary point of view, Mme. Blavatsky was, above all else, a writer of great paragraphs. There was too much force, too much of the volcanic element, in her character, to allow her to carry on one ordered thought in a placidly meandering stream; every subject suggested to her a thousand other points of interest; and along each of these thousand by-ways she is driven by her genius, and all the way is finding new and startling aspects of the universe.

Thus far the Glossary; then came a book with a name truly formidable, for which she was not indeed personally responsible. It was "A Modern Panarion". The meaning of this has been explained to me. It is said to mean "bread-basket"—in the literal, not the metaphorical sense of that expression; and was, I think, the title of a controversial work by one of the Church Fathers militant.

After the bread-basket, we had a new volume of the "Secret Doctrine", containing quantities of weirdly magnificent things, concerning the foundations of the word, the dark backward and abysm of time, fate, freedom and foreknowledge absolute. There are, besides, many strange sayings concerning the mighty dead; the sages of all time and every land, making up that splendid mystic brotherhood in whose hands has been the tutelage of the world, and from whom has poured down influence, since the dawn of Time.

Now we intend speaking of yet another work, and there is no sign that the supply is anything like exhausted. There is one thing which at once enlists our favor for the new volume; it is a part of her writings in her native tongue, and thus shares the literary advantages which won a way for the Caves and Jungles to many readers who were not in the least attracted by her other books.

When she wrote in English, in spite of her undoubted mastery of that complicated tongue, Mme. Blavatsky was under a linguistic difficulty and disadvantage; but there was much more in it than this. She was writing for an audience not merely critical, but even bitterly hostile, antagonistic to the last degree. And, even with her splendid nerve and Titanic force, this sense of steady opposition could not but cause a certain constraint, a certain feeling of conscious effort, a painstaking and laboured hesitation; so that, what is her own in her books, and that, by far the best and most original part of them, is often hidden and buried under the debris of other people's writings, whose facts she has used to strengthen and support her own positions. She was perpetually straining to prove things which, in the nature of things, are incapable of proof; and, as her power of dramatic and vivid expression was vastly superior to her argumentative faculty, the things to be proved are hindered, rather than helped, by the proofs. Yet even the debris of other writers, marshalled by a mind so vigorous and full of originality, cannot but be full of interest; and there is something worth reading on every page she compiled, as there is something worth remembering in every line she wrote of her own original work.

But in the Russian works, she is labouring under none of these disadvantages. The Russians were always proud of their heroic and adventurous country-woman; they saw at once that the element

of force in everything she said and did was in itself a sterling quality, a real thing. And the sense of this at once communicated itself to her, and tinged her Russian writings with a spirit of directness, of personal colouring, of warmth, freedom from constraint; in a word, created that atmosphere in which alone a writer can write well.

I may begin this essay on the latest of Mme. Blavatsky's posthumous children "The Magicians of the Blue Hills", by showing how she can paint, when she has an audience that praises her:

"Blue hills truly. Look at them from wherever you like, at whatever distance you choose—from below, from above, from the valley or the neighbouring heights—so long as they are not out of your sight, these two will strike you, from the extraordinary colour of their woods. Light blue with a golden reflection at a short distance, dark blue at a greater, they glitter like huge living sapphires, which breathe softly and change colour, shining with the waves of an interior light."

That is merely a single stroke of colour, but who can bring forward anything finer out of all the endless tomes that have been written concerning the wonders of the East? I need hardly point to the fact that the Nilgiris are the Blue Mountains of Mme. Blavatsky's book; the Magicians are the Todas and Mulu-Kurumbas, of whom more anon. But, before leaving the subject of Mme. Blavatsky's really magnificent descriptive powers, let me give her an opportunity to do herself more ample justice, in a long and finely sustained passage where many different sides of her high literary gift manifest themselves in turn:

"Listen and try to imagine the picture I am going to describe. Let us ascend the hill, nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, which, let it be said in passing, is visible far, far away, like a thin blue silk thread spreading itself over the Malabar coasts, and let us take a good look; we gaze over an extent of at least two hundred miles in diameter. Wherever we look, right, left, north and south, we see a shoreless ocean of green, pinkish and blue hills, of smooth or rugged rocks, of mountains of the most whimsical and fantastic outlines. A blue-green ocean, sparkling under the brilliant rays of the tropical sun, restless and covered with the masts of ships, already sunk or only sinking: the ocean we see sometimes in the shadowy land of our dreams.

"Turn to the north now. The Nilgiri chain, as if growing out of the pyramidal Jellamalay of the Western Ghats, at first looks like a gigantic bridge, nearly fifty miles long, and then rushes headlong onward, jutting out in huge projections and stairs deftly avoiding gaping precipices on both sides, and, at last, reaching the rounded forms of the Mysore hills, which are wrapped in velvety grayish mists. After this, the monster bridge nearly breaks to pieces, knocking itself against the sharp rocks of Pykar; it suddenly jumps off in a perpendicular line, divides itself into small separate rocks, then into mere boulders, and at last is transformed into a mad mountain stream of stone, tortured by impotent rage to overtake a swift bright river, hurrying away from the formidable stony bosom of the mother mountain.

"On the south of the Cairn Hill, for, at least, a hundred miles, spread dark forests, dreaming in the splendour of their unassailable virgin beauty, and the steaming marshes of Koimbatur, ending in the brick-red hills of Khand.

"Further to the east the central chain of the Ghats loses itself in the distance, like a huge stone serpent, zig-zagging between two rows of high volcanic rocks. Crowned as they are with separate clumps of pines, which look like short dishevelled hair on a human head, these rocks offer a most curious sight. Their shapes are so like human figures, that one almost thinks the volcanic force that squeezed them out, meant to prepare a stone model of man, about to be born. Seen through the thin veil of ever-moving mists, they also seem to move, these ancient cliffs in their attire of hoary moss. Like so many mischievous school boys, they hasten to leave the narrow pass; they push each other; they run races with each other; they jump over each other, to reach some wide, open space, where there is room for all, where freedom reigns. And far above their level, right under your feet, as you stand on the Cairn Hill, you see a picture of quite a different character: smiling green fields, speaking of rest, of childlike gladness and good will.

"Truly, a spring idyl of Virgil framed with stormy pictures of Dante's Inferno. Tiny emerald hillocks all enamelled with bright wild flowers, scattered like so many warts over the smiling face of the mother valley. Long silky grass and aromatic herbs. But instead of snow-white lambs and innocent shepherds and shepherd-

esses, you see herds of huge raven-black buffaloes, and, at a distance, the athletic silhouette of a young, long-haired Toda Tiralli or shepherd priest.

"On these heights, spring reigns eternally. Even in December and January, the frosty nights are always conquered by spring towards noon. Here everything is fresh and green, everything puts forth abundant blossom and fragrant aroma all the year round. In the rainy season, when the far off plains are nearly drowned by heavy downpours day and night, the Blue Hills have only occasional refreshing showers and look their best, for then their charm is like the charm of a baby, who is ready to smile even through his tears. Besides, on this height, everything seems to be in infancy and rejoicing in the new sensation of existence. The angry mountain torrents are not yet out of the cradle. Their thin sprays spring out of the mother stone and form sweet murmuring brooks, on whose diaphanous beds you see the atoms of the future formidable grim cliffs. In her double aspect, Nature offers here the true symbol of human life: pure and serene, baby-like, at the top; careworn, sad and sombre below. But, above or below, the flowers are bright, painted by the magic palette of India. Everything seems unusual, weird and strange to the newcomer from the valleys. In the mountains the wizened, dusky coolie gives place to the tall, fair-skinned Toda, with majestic face, like some old Greek or Roman, draped in a snow-white linen toga, unknown elsewhere in India; regarding the Hindu with the good-natured contempt of the bull who thoughtfully watches the black toad at his feet. Here the yellow-legged falcon of the plains is replaced by the mighty mountain eagle. And the withered grass and burned up cactuses of Madras are transformed into whole forests of gigantic reeds, where the elephant plays hide-and-seek, without any fear of ever-watching human eye. Here sings our Russian nightingale, and the European cuckoo lays her eggs in the nest of the yellow-nosed Southern myna. Contrasts await you at every step; wherever you look, you see an anomaly. The gay melodious chirping and songs of birds, unknown elsewhere in India, resound in the thick foliage of wild apple trees; and, at times, the wind carries away from the dark, gloomy forest the ill-omened howls of tigers and cheetahs and the lowing of wild buffaloes. Far above the forests,

the solemn silence is broken, at times, by low, mysterious sounds, half-rustling, half-murmuring, or some stifled, desperate shriek. But soon everything is silent again, basking in the scented waves of pure mountain air, and silence reigns supreme. In these hours of calm, the attentive, loving ear listens to the beating of nature's strong, healthy pulse, swiftly divining its never ceasing movements, even in these soundless protestations of glad life from the myriads of her creatures, visible and invisible.

"No! It is not easy to forget the Nilgiris. In this marvellous climate Mother Nature has brought together all her scattered powers to produce every possible sample of her great work. She playfully exhibits, turn by turn, the products of all the zones of our globe, sometimes rising to lively, energetic activity, sometimes sinking into weariness and forgetfulness. I have seen her somnolent in all the glory of her bright, ardent southern beauty, lulled to sleep by the accordant unanimous melody of all her kingdoms. I have met her also in her other mood, when, as if moved by a fierce pride, she reminded us of her unfathomed powers by the colossal plants of her tropical forests and the deafening roars of her giant animals. One more step, and she sinks down again, as if exhausted by her supreme efforts, and goes to sleep on the soft carpet of northern violets, forget-me-nots, and lilies of the valley. And there she lies, our great, mighty mother, mute and motionless, fanned by a sweet breeze and the tender wings of myriads of magically beautiful butterflies."

I think that whoever reads this, will confess that it would be hard to excel, and by no means easy to equal, as a piece of pure descriptive writing; the colours are so vivid, the imagery is so full of life, the whole picture conceived in such a broad and all-embracing spirit, that this passage should take rank as a classic, among the best things that have been written concerning India.

But it seems to me that something even more interesting than the literary workmanship of this passage, is its psychological quality —the subjective element in it; the insight it gives us into the mind and soul of the writer.

The first element in our subjective estimate is, here, as in everything Mme. Blavatsky said, wrote, or did, the element of force. Power was the key-note of her nature; and she could not

have kept it from showing, through half a page of her work, had she attempted to do so. Take the evidence of power, in one factor, to begin with—the most readily intelligible factor: the sustained effort shown by the production of a description of such great length, and of equally high value throughout. A less powerful mind would inevitably flag and grow weary, under such a protracted effort; and we should have the fact at once visible in weaker and weaker strokes towards the end of the passage. But there is no flagging, or withdrawal of energy here; the description flows onward, with increasing, rather than diminishing force; like a mighty river, that broadens and deepens, as it draws nearer to the sea.

The next element which strikes and interests us, is the deeply pathetic sentiment which pervades the whole; the feeling towards human life: "pure, serene, baby-like, at the top; careworn, sad and sombre below." There was a great deal of this profound sentiment of sadness in "the caves and Jungles of Hindustan." It is a sadness wholly different from the bitterness of the pessimist; for Mme. Blavatsky was no pessimist, but held the highest possible ideals of human perfection, and held them firmly to the end. But she saw, and latterly came more and more to see, that man has much to suffer, and many sorrows to pass through, before the shining goal can come into sight. And it is the sadness of real sympathy, and never the sadness of a bitter and disappointed mind, which tinges her Russian books. In her English work, this element is almost wholly lacking. And if her English books gain in philosophic quality, they certainly lose in human interest.

Another thing that we cannot fail to note, is the evidence everywhere of a mind not only learned, but, what is much more, truly cultured. Take that one sentence: "Truly a spring idyl of Virgil, framed with stormy pictures of Dante's Inferno." That is not the kind of sentence which is within the reach of mere superficial students of the great books of the world. One must have absorbed the very essence and spirit of them, and possessed them, as a real moral inheritance, before they can come to have this secondary and symbolical value.

THE LIFE OF MATTER.

That Western scientists are beginning to realize the truth of the Eastern teachings in regard to the construction and action of "matter" is becoming more and more evident every day. The investigations of Dr. Jagardis Chunder Bose on the subject of irritability, or response to stimulus, in so-called "dead matter," shows that the Western investigator is approaching the teaching of the *Secret Doctrine* that all matter both "alive" and "dead" is composed of innumerable "lives."

Prof. Bose, though a Hindu by birth, has conducted his investigations on Western lines. He received most of his education in England, graduated from his university with honors, and now holds a chair in Calcutta University, India. For many years he has been experimenting with electric radiation and allied subjects and in his most recent investigations, which are described in his book, "The Response of Matter," Prof. Bose reaches the conclusion that the response to stimulus, which characteristic has heretofore believed to belong to living matter alone, is now shared by what is commonly considered "dead matter"—or at any rate by metals.

During a course of experiments on receivers for wireless telegraphy Prof. Bose attempted to construct artificial organs of sense and he succeeded in devising apparatus that transmitted impressions received from without, these impressions being recorded by an electrical recorder just in the same way that our sense organs, the ear for example, send messages from the outside to be recorded by the brain.

Says *The Review of Reviews* in discussing Prof. Bose's book:

It is hardly to his mind a question of similarity, but rather of identity. For what is the distinctive characteristic of life? Is it not the power to respond to external stimulus? We pinch or pass an electric shock through the arm, and a visible twitch shows that the muscle is still living. A dead body does not respond when pinched or shocked; the sudden twitch is thus an indication of life. Physiologists make the twitching muscle record its autograph on a traveling strip of paper, and the autographic record tells the history of the muscle, the story of its stress and strain. When it is fresh the writing is bold and strong, as fatigue proceeds it is in-

distinct, and when the muscle dies the record comes to a stop. These are, however, but gross indications of the vital condition. There are other and subtler processes which cannot be so easily detected. Nervous impulses, for instance, are transmitted without any visible changes in the nerve. Yet when a flash of light falls on the eye, something is sent along the optic nerve to the brain, there to be interpreted (or recorded) as visual sensations. This visual impulse, produced by the stimulus of light, is an electric impulse.

These electric sensations are regarded as the signs of life, external stress, like light and sound, give rise to them, and the electric currents thus set up excite the brain and cause sensation. But when the organism dies, accidentally or otherwise, the living mobility of its particles ceases, the stress-pulse can no longer be sent along the nerves, and there is an end of response.

The electric twitch in answer to external stress is thus the perfect and universal sign of life, and the autographic records of these electric twitches show us the waxing and waning of life. Their gradual decline shows the effect of fatigue, their exaltation the climax of artificial stimulation, rapid decline the anesthetic action of chloroform, total abolition, the end of life.

But is this electric impulse, the sign of life, entirely confined to living things? Is it quite wanting in what we know as the inorganic?

By means of Dr. Bose's instrument this question can be answered definitely, for when the metals were stimulated by a pinch they also made their autographic records by electric twitches, and thus, being responsive, showed that they could in no sense be called "dead"! Nay, more, it was found that given the records for living muscles, nerves and metals, it was impossible to distinguish one record from the other. For the metals also, when continuously excited, showed gradual fatigue; as with ourselves, so with them, a period of repose revived their power of response,—even a tepid bath was found helpful in renewing their vigor; freezing brought on cold torpidity, and too great a rise in temperature brought heat rigor.

Death can be hastened by poison. Then can the metals be poisoned? In answer to this was shown the most astonishing part

of Prof. Bose's experiments. A piece of metal which was exhibiting electrical twitches was poisoned; it seemed to pass through an electric spasm, and at once the signs of its activity grew feebler, till it became rigid. A dose of some antidote was next applied; the metal began slowly to revive, and after a while gave its normal response once more.

The tracings of the instrument used by Prof. Bose to record these impulses—an instrument similar to that used for recording the human pulse beats,—show this phenomena to such a degree that it is impossible to say whether the tracings have been made by a person, a plant or a metal. Where the effect is shown of stimulant exciting the electric pulse of metal, the tracing is practically identical with that made by the human pulse under the same conditions, and the tracing shown by a nerve, a plant and a metal, where the same poison was used to abolish the response to sensation, are so nearly alike that it is almost impossible to say which is which.

To the Western scientist these researches of Prof. Bose open a new and vast field of inquiry and speculation. We see that no longer can the hard-and-fast line be drawn between that which is called living and that which is called dead, between the organic and the inorganic, between that which responds to stimulus and that which does not. In both we see matter as a whole possessing irritability and passing through the states of responsiveness and irresponsiveness; the animal, the plant and the metal responding to stimulus in many cases identical.

It is but another confirmation of the old Eastern teachings, the teachings that we found and lost and now are slowly finding again. We realize that animal, plant and stone, while outwardly different, are all part of, and are equally identified with the great Whole, and we are brought a step nearer to the breaking down of the barrier of separateness.

"BIRTH A NEW CHANCE"

BY REV. COLUMBUS BRADFORD, A. M.

This book was extensively noticed editorially in THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM for May, 1902. The author is a Methodist minister, who advocates the doctrine of Reincarnation, drawing his arguments chiefly from the Bible.

Although he had no knowledge of Theosophical teachings when he wrote this book, at least in his present life, the book is proving a good forerunner for Theosophical literature. Several Theosophists are buying copies of it and presenting them to their non-Theosophist friends with a view to following it up with their own literature.

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The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

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The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

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Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S. A., P. O. Box 1584, New York.